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Tuesday, 15 August 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Italy	Mr. Lambertini
	Japan	Mr. Kawamura
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Sadykov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin-Nyoni
	Ukraine	Mr. Fesko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Mali to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. El-Ghassim Wane, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Wane.

Mr. Wane: It is my pleasure to address the Security Council and to provide a briefing on the activities of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) joint force, including on its operationalization, as well as on the challenges encountered and possible measures for further consideration, as requested by the Council in resolution 2359 (2017), two months after it welcomed the creation of the joint force.

The cross-border dimension of the terrorist threat in the Sahel region, as well as the serious challenges posed by transnational organized crime and its links with terrorism, continue to pose a serious threat to stability, prosperity and growth in the Sahel region. In Mali, attacks by violent extremist groups on national security forces, international forces and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) remain a sad reality and hamper the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, one of the key elements for the stabilization efforts in the region. Their activities know no borders, and time and again we have seen vicious attacks also in neighbouring countries and in the broader region. This past weekend was marked by the heinous attacks in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, and on MINUSMA camps in Douenza and Timbuktu.

Worst of all, however, are the consequences borne by the civilian population, which suffers from intimidation and violence and bears the brunt of inadequate or non-existing social services, which this insecurity negatively affects. In Mali, the number of State officials present in the northern part of the country has decreased by 10 per cent compared with last year; persistent threats by extremist groups targeting schoolteachers, students and parents resulted in the closure of 178 secular schools. This erosion of State authority provides a fertile breeding ground for violent extremist and terrorist groups. The countless numbers of young people in the Sahel facing job insecurity and even chronic poverty could all too easily fall prey to these groups. The situation is dire, and time to identify and implement solutions is, unfortunately, running out.

Allow me here to acknowledge and value the contribution and sacrifices made by so many African countries to peace operations on the continent. The countries of the G-5 Sahel are undertaking tremendous efforts, in multiple theatres across vast and inhospitable terrains and with limited resources, to improve security in the Sahel and to counter violent extremism and drug and arms smuggling, including in the fight against Boko Haram, and elsewhere in the region.

Against this backdrop, the strong determination and commitment of the G-5 Sahel member States to share the responsibility to collectively tackle these challenges head on and to protect civilians in their respective territories, as underlined in resolution 2359 (2017), is commendable. The creation of a joint force to address terrorism and transnational organized crime threats, including through the conduct of cross-border joint military operations, demonstrates regional ownership of regional challenges and is an acknowledgment that these will require collective action and unity of purpose. As such, it bears the potential of significantly contributing to the stabilization of the Sahel region, and in turn facilitating MINUSMA's implementation of its mandate.

Since the decision taken by the G-5 Sahel Heads of State in February to create a joint force of 5,000 military, as well as police and civilian personnel, important steps towards its implementation have been undertaken. I should like in particular to highlight the following.

First, efforts aimed at the development of the normative framework that would allow a swift operationalization of the joint force have been made. Key strategic documents — such as the concept of operations, the command architecture, a preliminary budget and a memorandum of understanding on extraterritoriality — have been adopted by the G-5

Sahel Comité de défense et de securité and endorsed by the African Union Peace and Security Council, and the scale and scope of the force and its operations have been further defined.

Secondly, a two-phased approach has been agreed. The joint force is set to initially conduct cross-border operations in three strategic sectors, and subsequently to consolidate and enhance bilateral and multilateral cooperation among the G-5 Sahel member States.

Thirdly, in terms of staffing, General Didier Dacko of Mali was appointed Force Commander of the G-5 Sahel force in June, and has begun assembling his team in the force's provisional headquarters in Bamako.

Fourthly, the force's permanent headquarters in Sévaré is currently being equipped and is projected to attain initial operational capability by the end of August.

Fifthly, immediate priority in terms of operations will be given to the Central Sector, along Mali's borders with the Niger and Burkina Faso, where the force is planning to conduct coordinated operations in October. These operations will build on existing trilateral efforts of Mali, Burkina Faso and the Niger in the Liptako-Gourma triangle. The operationalization and force generation for Sectors East and West headquarters, including the deployment of one company per sector to attain initial operational capability, is scheduled for spring 2018.

Sixthly, the generation of 105 provost police officers, who are expected to fulfil judicial policing functions and to contribute to addressing transnational organized crime, as well as of a small civilian component, which is expected to be composed of three advisers to the Force Commander on human rights, humanitarian and development issues, is ongoing.

Lastly, the budgetary requirements to fund both the start-up of the joint force, including initial investments in infrastructure, staffing and operations in the first year were set at €423 million. Out of this amount, approximately €234 million are projected for initial investments, €110 million for operational costs and €83 million for personnel-related costs. As Council members will recall, resolution 2359 (2017) bestows the primary responsibility for resource mobilization on the G-5 Sahel member States. In this light, I should like to applaud the commitment of the G-5 Sahel member States to pooling their resources and contributing €10 million each to the budget.

Given the domestic economic challenges facing the G-5 Sahel countries, these pledges are particularly laudable. Their joint contribution of €50 million, in conjunction with the European Union's pledged contribution of €50 million, as announced by Commissioner Mogherini during her visit to Bamako in June, and France's logistical and financial contribution to the force worth €8 million, brings the total to €108 million, or 25 per cent of total requirements as currently defined the amount of money needed for the force to be fully operational. The G-5 Sahel countries, with the support of international partners, have undertaken a technical review of resource requirements, which may lead to a better delineation and fine-tuning of the initially projected financial needs. The planned meeting, to be hosted by the German and French Defence Ministers in Berlin in September, will provide an opportunity to further explore options for the support of the start-up of the joint force, to be followed by a planning conference, as requested in resolution 2359 (2017), later this year.

While generating pledges and contributions to meet the requirements of the joint force will be critical, the setting up of transparent, coordinated and effective funding will be equally as important. We understand that, in terms of what was pledged by the European Union, efforts in this respect are already under way. I also urge G-5 Sahel member States to swiftly make good on these pledges so that they can be utilized for the further operationalization of the joint force.

Given the complexity of the issues to be addressed and the multitude of stakeholders in the region, resolutions 2359 (2017) and 2364 (2017) urge the joint force, MINUSMA and the international forces to ensure adequate coordination and information-sharing on their operations, within their respective mandates. Allow me here to highlight a few additional points.

First, MINUSMA is currently prioritizing the establishment of a common post in Mopti, in line with its political and security mandated tasks in Central Mali, which will also allow close coordination with the first focus area of the G-5 Sahel, starting in October.

Secondly, in addition, existing coordination mechanisms between MINUSMA, the French forces, the Malian defence and security forces, the European Union (EU) Training Mission in Mali and EUCAP Sahel Niger will be adapted to accommodate the joint force in order to facilitate information-sharing. The Mission is

also preparing the deployment of liaison officers to and from the G-5 Sahel.

Thirdly, further and as per resolution 2359 (2017), MINUSMA is providing logistical and strategic support, within existing resources, to the Malian defence and security forces with a view to accelerating their redeployment to the northern and central parts of Mali. In that connection, the Mission is finalizing a protocol with the Malian defence and security forces to define the modalities and scope of this support and the coordination of operations in the north and centre of Mali.

Fourthly, these measures, in conjunction with MINUSMA's core mandated tasks in support of the extension of State authority across Mali, will be a further contribution to enable the Malian authorities to proactively address security challenges, including through G-5 Sahel force, as well as to enhance governance mechanisms and accelerate the implementation of the peace agreement.

(spoke in French)

Although the developments I just referred to attest to the political will of the States members of the G-5 for the Sahel to operationalize the joint force, significant challenges remain and a number of issues need to be addressed.

First of all, it is important to respond to the enormous needs, not only in terms of funding and funding mechanisms but also with regard to force generation, training and equipment, tactical support, intelligence and communications technologies, medical evacuation capabilities and providing protection for the force as well as the camps.

Secondly, the potential impact of force-generation efforts on subsequent operations and on MINUSMA's posture must also be considered carefully.

Thirdly, certain aspects of the legal framework, such as modalities pertaining to the right of pursuit beyond the limits of each each zone, must be better defined and require additional agreements among the States members of the G-5 Sahel.

Fourthly, with regard to the rules of engagement, it should be noted that the success of the force will depend upon the support of the people. It is therefore essential to ensure strict compliance with international humanitarian law and human rights law, including implementing measures to mitigate the impact of military operations on civilians. Among other things, the latter implies the establishment of appropriate mechanisms for the handing over to the competent authorities of persons arrested by the joint force, including minors, and the sharing of information on arrests and detentions.

The G-5 Sahel joint force presents a unique opportunity to respond to regional challenges through a regional approach. In order to fully take advantage of that opportunity, it is important that other aspects of the causes of instability in Mali and in the region be addressed simultaneously. Addressing the root causes of instability in the Sahel requires going beyond military action and tackling the governance gap, chronic poverty and unemployment, climate change and financing for development; it is also necessary to address cross-border crime.

I should also like to emphasize the primacy of politics and the need for a political strategy to guide the activities of the joint force so as to ensure that they are aligned with the Malian peace process and other regional initiatives. Resolution 2359 (2017) calls for the prompt and effective implementation of regional strategies by the States members of the G-5 for the Sahel and their international partners. The joint force can make a significant contribution to the stabilization of the Sahel region, in synergy with other existing initiatives.

In order to better coordinate and refocus the attention of the United Nations system on the Sahel, the Secretary-General recently established an Executive Committee working group on the Sahel, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, which has already begun to meet.

Lastly, in order to better support and promote regional ownership, it is important that the deployment of the joint force be part of the African Union's Peace and Security Architecture. The Nouakchott process could be an effective tool to that end. We hope that, as the force's concept of operations matures, it will receive the support and cooperation of other countries in the region.

The establishment of the G-5 Sahel foint force has the potential to make a significant contribution to the efforts already under way to stabilize the region. Once again, I congratulate the member States of the G-5 for the Sahel for the considerable efforts they are making. The success of the force will depend upon

both the deepening of this regional partnership and the relevant political framework, and the determination of the G-5 for the Sahel member States to achieve its operationalization, as well as the unflagging support of of their international partners. The United Nations will remain ready to contribute to that partnership and to efforts aimed at supporting this initiative. We welcome the proposal to submit a written report on those efforts in October, as called for in resolution 2359 (2017).

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Wane for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Wane for his very illuminating briefing.

I would like to begin my statement by reiterating France's full solidarity with Burkina Faso in the aftermath of the terrorist attack on a restaurant in Ouagadougou, which led to the deaths of 18 people. Our condolences go also to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and to Togo and Mali following the death yesterday of a Togolese peacekeeper and seven Malian civilian and military personnel during attacks against MINUSMA camps. Those attacks, sadly, remind us of the intensity of the terrorist threat faced by the countries of the Sahel today, as well as the need for an urgent response.

The terrorist threat in the Sahel not only jeopardizes the stability of the countries of the region; it also has a direct impact on the security of many other countries — in Europe and throughout the rest of the world. It calls for mobilization by the entire international community in support of the efforts of the countries of the region, while not neglecting any dimension of the crisis. France is fully playing its part in that effort by deploying to the field the 4,000 soldiers of Operation Barkhane, who are carrying out counter-terrorist actions in the region at the request and in support of the countries of the Sahel. Twenty of them gave their lives doing so. In addition, during the Summit of the countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) held in Bamako on 2 July, President Macron launched an alliance for the Sahel aimed at addressing the deep-rooted causes of terrorism in the G-5 Sahel countries, including projects in the areas of education, agriculture and renewable energy, as Assistant Secretary-General Wane just mentioned to us.

Moreover, the security situation in the Sahel remains directly linked to the situation in Mali. In that regard, it is crucial that the Malian parties speed up the concrete implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, without which there will be no lasting peace or stability in the Sahel.

The specific modus operandi of terrorist groups in the Sahel, which take advantage of borders and sustain themselves on trafficking of all sorts, especially in drugs and human beings, requires us to provide a concerted and comprehensive response. It is precisely with that goal in mind that the G-5 Sahel countries set up the joint force, which is intended to provide a coordinated response on the security and economic fronts, as well as at the humanitarian and developmental levels. Their initiative was endorsed by the African Union and by the Security Council, with the Council providing clear and unanimous political support in the framework of resolution 2359 (2017). The establishment of the joint force is also fully in line — and this must be pointed out — with the Council's views in favour of establishing an African security architecture bringing together the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the framework of a partnership approach.

The G-5 Sahel joint force will support and complement MINUSMA's efforts in Mali by conducting counter-terrorist activities in the Sahel region as a whole that are outside the mandate and geographic scope of MINUSMA. That will enable MINUSMA to focus on its priority tasks and implement its mandate more quickly. The joint force will also act in coordination with the French forces of Operation Barkhane, which supports its operationalization. It will be important that the force's operations take place fully in line with international humanitarian law and human rights law, as set out in its concept of operations.

We welcome the determination and the concrete actions taken by the G-5 Sahel countries to operationalize the joint force as soon as possible, with the aim of carrying out by October initial operations in the Liptako-Gourma priority zone, located in the shared border area between Mali, the Niger and Burkina Faso. The finalization in the coming days of the construction works at the Sévaré central command post is an important first step in that direction. The

commitment of the G-5 Sahel countries each to allocate $10 million annually for the financing of the force, in addition to their current contributions to peacekeeping in the region, also reflects the high priority they attach to this issue. We must support their efforts.

While it is the G-5 Sahel countries' responsibility to take a leading role in establishing the joint force, we also believe that the international community has a moral and political duty to support the African States in the region that have joined together to fight terrorism by supplying resources to complement the Council's peacekeeping operations. We are therefore pleased that the European Union has already announced a contribution of €50 million intended in part to finance the operations of the joint force's command structures. France is also making a national contribution of major material assistance amounting to more than €8 million, in addition to Operation Barkhane's engagement on the ground.

Lastly, along with our European partners, we will continue to support the G-5 Sahel countries in mobilizing the backing of international donors. After a first such event, held in Paris in June, Germany and France will hold a second workshop in Berlin on 18 September, in order to solicit European countries' contributions in support of the force's initial deployment. Beyond that, the donor conference to be held in December and provided for in resolution 2359 (2017) will pool the entire international community's contributions, this time with the goal of enabling the joint force to reach full operating capacity by March.

However, France, together with a large majority of Council members, still firmly believes that United Nations support to the G-5 Sahel joint force is essential. To start with, on the political front, it is an irreplaceable guarantee that lends international legitimacy and legality to the G-5 Sahel countries' commendable efforts to fight terrorism and its underlying causes. Operationally, it is also the best way to ensure, first, that the actors involved in combating terrorism in the region are well coordinated; secondly, that our resources are being used as effectively as possible; and thirdly, that the joint force will receive the invaluable logistical, medical and mechanical support from international forces that it needs in a complicated situation. We should understand that without that support, the joint force's operations will have a very limited scope.

Lastly, France will continue to work to ensure that the Council follows up diligently on this issue, which affects the security of us all. In that regard, we will soon propose sending a Security Council mission to the Sahel with, among other things, the aim of assessing how far the joint force is operationalized on the ground. During France's presidency of the Council, our Minister for European and Foreign Affairs will also convene a ministerial-level meeting on the G-5 Sahel that will enable us to continue our consideration of the international community's modalities of support to the joint force in the follow-up to resolution 2359 (2017) and the Secretary-General's report on the subject, which is due in October.

The G-5 Sahel States have courageously shouldered their responsibilities by uniting in their effort to combat terrorism, which concerns us all. The establishment of their joint force is giving rise to great expectations on the part of the Governments and peoples of the region who want to see terrorism and its causes eradicated. The Council's responsibility is to ensure that those expectations are not disappointed and to live up to the commitment of the G-5 Sahel and its duty to maintain international peace and security. It can count on France's determination and involvement in that.

Mr. Lambertini (Italy) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Wane for his very detailed and focused briefing.

Today the Sahel region is dealing with a number of major security challenges, including terrorism, illegal trafficking and transnational crime, which have effects that extend well beyond its borders and are a threat to the region, to Africa and to Europe as well. The recent tragic events affecting Burkina Faso and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) have reminded us how serious the situation is, and we offer our condolences to the families of the victims.

In the Mediterranean, Italy is witness daily to the effects of instability in the Sahel in its continuing efforts to combat the threats of terrorism, illegal trafficking in human beings and the criminal networks that manage them. Destroying these criminal organizations and stabilizing the region as a whole are top priorities for Italy. In that context, we believe firmly that close cooperation with the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) is crucial if we are to deal effectively with the issue, which is why Italy has ramped up its initiatives

in the region. My country warmly welcomed the G-5 Sahel countries' decision to establish a joint force with the help of the African Union. We are pleased that we can count on them as partners in our shared concerns. Their efforts have also been acknowledged by the Security Council, which supported the joint force's establishment through its adoption of resolution 2359 (2017) and has encouraged the international community to back it as well. Italy will continue its support both bilaterally and within the framework of its action through the European Union and the Council.

I would like to focus on three aspects that we consider priorities for cooperation with the G-5 Sahel, and especially ones that we in New York are in a position to pursue further.

First, I would like to emphasize the issue of coordinating our cooperation. I think it is vital to ensure that the G-5 Sahel joint force is harmonized both with existing regional initiatives such as MINUSMA and with international stakeholders in the Sahel such as, for instance, the European Union, which has been involved in the region for many years. In that regard, we urge the G-5 Sahel countries to engage fully in deepening their dialogue with the African Union.

Secondly, we need a political strategy for tackling the region's problems. In that regard, I believe that conceptually, the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel will continue to be a very useful tool, even if its implementation has been lacking so far. In our view, the Security Council should work to relaunch it and include the G-5 Sahel in that effort, since their goals and those of the Strategy are identical — governance, security, resilience and development.

Thirdly, we think it is important to consider the G-5 Sahel joint force's financing. Their work deserves the Council's full support, because they align perfectly with the United Nations effort already under way through MINUSMA. The European Union has already shown its willingness to support the G-5 Sahel countries, and in our view the United Nations should support African countries' operations on both the financial and political fronts.

Resolution 2359 (2017) marked a new stage in the process of increasing the effectiveness of the interaction between the United Nations and African regional and subregional organizations in peacekeeping. We believe that the concept of African ownership continues to be a crucial element in this and we stand ready to pursue a dialogue with the other members of the Council on the subject of United Nations support to the G-5 Sahel joint force.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank Mr. El-Ghassim Wane, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his thorough briefing.

I would like to express Uruguay's heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of Burkina Faso, Mali and Togo for the cowardly attacks of 13 August in Ouagadougou and yesterday in Douentza and Timbuktu. Such irreparable loss of life is once again the painful, sad result of such despicable attacks on innocent civilians and those who risk their lives to help restore and strengthen peace in conflict zones. Events such as the tragic experiences of the past two days show that there that the Sahel still has a long, hard road to travel before it reaches the peace it has desired for so long.

Uruguay commends Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger for the significant step they have taken towards achieving stability in the region. Their initiative in establishing a joint force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) is the result of their laudable joint efforts to combat terrorism and establish full State authority in their lands.

The terrorist threat in the Sahel region knows no political borders. That is why we applaud the G-5 Sahel countries' regional and multidimensional approach to the challenges. The implementation of the G-5 Sahel joint force is a clear example of national ownership by countries facing those challenges. That initiative demonstrates clear political will that ought to be recognized internationally, as the proliferation of terrorism in the Sahel region is a global problem that affects the entire international community.

In that regard, we believe that the international community must act as partners to support the national efforts of the G-5 Sahel countries. Let us not forget that the G-5 Sahel initiative was conceived originally as an institutional and follow-up framework for the drafting of development policies for the five member countries. More recently, and in the face of the growing threat of terrorism, radicalism and transnational organized crime, it has needed to be supplemented by the creation, this year, of a multinational force of 5,000 troops. Undoubtedly, the deployment of the G-5 Sahel force will be another major stabilization

situation in the subregion. We highlight with great concern the consequences of interventionism and regime change policies since, after the 2011 conflict in Libya, one of its side effects was the destabilization of the Sahel, bringing with it chaos, terrorism and militarization, with regrettable consequences that continue to this day. The movement of armed groups from Libya to the countries of the Sahel has also made possible the transfer of large-calibre weapons, such as portable air-defence systems, anti-tank missiles, mortars, heavy machine guns, assault rifles, improvised explosive devices, antipersonnel mines and others, which were used in the Libyan civil war and which are now being used now to carry out attacks against national security forces, civilians and members of peacekeeping missions on the ground.

Moreover, we cannot ignore the issue of exploitation of natural resources. The countries of the subregion, such as Mauritania, Mali and the Niger, are considerably rich in minerals, while Chad is rich in hydrocarbons. In the case of the Sahel and Africa in general, illegal exploitation by armed groups and the growing presence of transnational corporations that take most of the wealth and profits, leaving minimal income for the countries where they operate, make the situation more difficult and hinders socioeconomic development. Controlling areas that are rich in natural resources and effective border surveillance initiatives are tasks that should be based on an institutional strategy and framework, with the support of the international community. Bolivia firmly believes in the need to establish the future basis for peace and coexistence, joining efforts and means for the proper management of natural resources, with respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all States.

In addition, my delegation wishes to highlight once again that it is the duty of the Security Council not only to analyse the state of affairs in conflict zones, but also to address the causes that triggered or caused them, and keep them current.

In conclusion, we encourage the African Union and the international community to continue to provide technical support, economic and humanitarian cooperation to all efforts aimed at achieving stability and lasting peace in the Sahel subregion.

Mr. Kawamura (Japan): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Wane for his extensive briefing. We are grateful for this important update on the joint force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel).

I would like to take a moment to express Japan's heartfelt condolences to the families and Governments of all victims of Sunday's heinous terrorist attack in Burkina Faso, as well as yesterday's attack on the camp of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission (MINUSMA) in Mopti, Mali, and its headquarters in Timbuktu. These incidents clearly demonstrate the deepening threat facing all Sahel countries. With that in mind, Japan would like to underline a few priority areas for the joint force, in particular regarding cooperation with MINUSMA.

The first area is ownership. We commend the committed efforts of the G-5 Sahel countries to operationalize the joint force and restore peace and security in the region. This is a prime example of regional ownership, which will be a critical factor in the success of the G-5 Sahel.

The second priority area is the pursuit of common efforts in support of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. The persistent delays in its implementation are compounded by violations of the terms of the Peace Agreement and sporadic terrorist attacks. The joint force's unique role of supporting effective implementation by isolating armed terrorist groups is thus especially important. A central focus on the Peace Agreement at this stage is critical. To that end, we underscore the importance of enhanced coordination among the joint force, MINUSMA and French forces.

Finally, I would like to emphasize partnership. The scale of the challenges facing the G-5 Sahel countries is vast and wide ranging. Continued partnership with the international community will be essential to restoring stability and addressing deep-rooted vulnerabilities. The Sahel's large youth population requires inclusive and sustainable livelihoods, which can prevent their radicalization and underpin social stability in the region. Together with youth, the role of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding is also critical. We believe that supporting G-5 Sahel countries through the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel is also crucial.

We must work hand in hand with G-5 Sahel countries to comprehensively address these areas. Japan looks forward to determined and good faith efforts by the G-5 Sahel in this joint endeavour.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Wane for his briefing on activities that have been undertaken over the past two months since the adoption of resolution 2359 (2017) to operationalize the joint force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel). As usual, it was a very comprehensive, lucid and helpful briefing.

Let me take this opportunity to condemn in the strongest terms the terrorist attack in Ouagadougou, as well as that in Mali against the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. We express our sympathy to and solidarity with the families of the victims of these attacks, and we hope that the perpetrators of these heinous attacks will be held to account. We fully support the press statement issued by the Council yesterday (SC/12955). This most recent attack again serves to underscore the importance of the G-5 Sahel joint force and the need for its speedy operationalization to combat the threat of terrorism and violent extremism faced by countries of the Sahel region, including Burkina Faso and Mali. In that regard, we welcome the official launching of the G-5 Sahel joint force on 2 July and take note of the efforts being made to fully operationalize it before the end of this year.

The G-5 Sahel countries have demonstrated their commitment to fighting terrorism and transnational organized crime by mobilizing their forces and resources, but they need more financial and logistical support to fully operationalize the joint force. We note the commitment made by some bilateral and multilateral partners in financing the joint force, but what has so far been pledged falls far short of what is needed to cover the preliminary budget required to sustain the force for one year

The funding gap will be a major challenge hampering the full operationalization of the joint force, and there is an urgent need to exert more effort to mobilize international support for the force. In that context, we note the plan by France and Germany to organize a conference in Berlin in mid-September to secure more support for logistics and training for the G-5 Sahel joint force. Without adequate financial and logistical support, it would be extremely difficult to fully operationalize the force, let alone sustain it. That is why the issue requires serious attention. We hope that bilateral and multilateral partners will enhance their support to the joint force.

We believe the holding of the planning conference in line with resolution 2359 (2017) could be instrumental in mobilizing the international community in support of the G-5 Sahel countries. It is indeed vital that the Council support that regional initiative. We believe that it is in line with the global regional partnership that was advocated by the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and the Secretary-General's implementation report (S/2015/682). It is obvious that the United Nations does not have the capacity to fight terrorism. It is therefore only appropriate that it provides the necessary support to those regional organizations and arrangements that are ready and willing to carry out such operations.

That should be seen for what it is, namely, a contribution of global significance, although, on the surface, it looks local and regional. As the representative of France stated earlier, that is why the international community has a moral responsibility to contribute to the efforts being made by the G-5 Sahel countries. In fact, when one looks at the genesis of the whole crisis, one can argue that the international community also has a political responsibility. Of course, the multi-faceted challenge facing the Sahel region can be effectively addressed only through a comprehensive strategy that encompasses security, governance, development, human rights and humanitarian issues. Therefore, as called for in resolution 2359 (2017), the rapid and effective implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel is critical. We hope that the countries of the region, in cooperation with bilateral and multilateral partners, will redouble their efforts in implementing the Strategy. No doubt, as the representative of Sweden stated, the question of coordination is an issue that should be given very high priority.

Mr. Sadykov (Kazakhstan): We thank Assistant Secretary-General Wane for his insightful briefing.

First of all, I would like to express our deepest condolences and solidarity to the people and the Government of Burkina Faso and to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) following the recent terrorist attack, which claimed the life of Togolese peacekeepers and a number of civilians in Burkina Faso.

The situation in the Sahel remains fragile due to the threat from Boko Haram, the Islamic State and other terrorists, violent extremists and organized crime

groups. We therefore welcome the formal launch of the joint force at the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) Heads of State Summit in Bamako on 2 July. We fully support the decision in order to better combat terrorism and transnational organized crime. Such a force will positively contribute to maintaining stability in the region and complement the efforts of MINUSMA and Operation Barkhane.

The provision of steady financial support continues to be the main challenge due to a significant gap in funding the force. We commend and encourage the continuation of the commitment of the G-5 Sahel countries, as well as the support provided by European Union and France. We encourage countries and international organizations to make considerable pledges at the donors' conference to be held in Berlin in September, with a view to mobilizing adequate resources for the force to achieve its goals.

At the same time, it is unlikely that a strictly military approach will be enough to address instability in the region. Instability is the result of the sedimentation of problems of which violent extremism is only the most recent layer. For us, an important threat therefore is the challenge to the legitimacy of the State and competition between pastoralists and crop growers, which results in clashes among the various communities.

There is a need to focus on the root causes of the conflict and on promoting development. Kazakhstan is convinced that a subregional and comprehensive approach that links security, development and humanitarian efforts is the most efficient way to achieve peace and prosperity. Those goals will be achieved only through more effective implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. Addressing impunity and corruption, advancing structural reforms in the areas of security, justice and the rule of law, promoting human rights, increasing resilience and the engagement of women and young people are equally important parts of the Strategy

We also welcome the announcement of the alliance for the Sahel — a joint initiative by France, Germany and the European Union to improve development cooperation in the region and promote innovative initiatives among the European Union, the World Bank Group, the African Development Bank and the United Nations. We should strive for initiatives that complement current efforts to address the many underlying causes of instability in the region. Concerted efforts to promote a strong policy on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, with long-term funding for its effective implementation, are also vital for ensuring peace in West Africa and the Sahel.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Wane for today's important update.

Countering violent extremism and terror across the globe is very important for us all. As others have noted today, the recent attacks in Burkina Faso and Mali clearly serve to drive that point home. The United States understands the seriousness of the threats in the Sahel region and we were proud to extend a strong message of support from the Security Council to the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) joint force — a noble and important regional effort — by co-sponsoring resolution 2359 (2017) in June.

We also recognize the fundamental importance of achieving political solutions to long-lasting conflicts in order to better guarantee peace and security in the region, especially in Mali, where signatory parties are not keeping their end of the bargain. We commend the G-5 Sahel countries for their sacrifices in countering terrorism in the Sahel and we thank France for its continued leadership on this vital work and for its own sacrifices. We believe that deeper cooperation among the G-5 Sahel countries has the potential to improve their security and complement the efforts of the peacekeeping Mission in Mali. To that end, the United States will continue its long-standing bilateral support for developing and building the capacity of the G-5 Sahel members' security forces. We will work closely with our partners to find ways to help the G-5 Sahel joint force be effective, well coordinated with other counter-terrorism efforts in the region and, ultimately, sustainable.

The United States is eager to take advantage of other opportunities to further coordinate with other donors in the countries of the Sahel. We look forward to the holding of a donors' planning conference, at which we hope to identify, coordinate and synchronize assistance aimed at operationalizing the joint force. We believe that approach will result in greater security and, ultimately, the freedom from terror sought by the peoples of the region. The United States will continue to work closely with regional stakeholders and partners to make sure that the combined international response to this threat is the right one.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our strong support for the G-5 Sahel countries' undertaking. We will continue to stand with them.

Mr. Shen Bo (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting, and Assistant Secretary-General Wane for his important briefing. We also welcome the Permanent Representative of Mali to today's meeting.

We condemn the terrorist attacks in Burkina Faso on 13 August and yesterday on the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and we would like to express our sincere condolences to the Governments of the countries concerned and to the families of the victims. Such attacks show that the security situation in the Sahel remains very difficult. Terrorist and extremist organizations' activities are spreading, and transnational organized crime is a major problem. If peace and security are to be restored in the Sahel, it is important to ensure that the countries of the region and the international community continue to step up their efforts and take an integrated approach. The decision of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) to set up a joint force to deal with the region's problems has been approved by the African Union and reflects African countries' willingness to work together and contribute significantly to peace and security in Africa and around the world. Resolution 2359 (2017), which the Council adopted on 21 June, commended the G-5 Sahel countries' decision to establish a joint force, thereby demonstrating the support of the international community. In early July, the G-5 Sahel countries officially launched the implementation of the force.

We welcome those developments and commend the efforts and significant contributions of the countries of the region in combating terrorism and maintaining peace in the Sahel. We hope that the joint force will play an important role in the restoration of peace and security in the region. The international community should fully respect and give full play to Africa's leading role when it comes to solving African problems, and should support the efforts of countries in the region to defend peace and security in the Sahel. In the current situation, it is important for the international community to carefully examine the circumstances under which the force will carry out its mandate. In particular, with regard to the difficulties faced by the force in logistics and funding, we will have to consider practical steps that can be taken, provide assistance that is targeted accordingly and improve the joint force's capacity to carry out its mandate. China hopes that the joint force will seek synergy by coordinating its actions with those of MINUSMA and others. We will work together with the international community in order to continue to play a constructive role in building peace, security and development in the Sahel and in Africa generally.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing today's briefing, and Mr. El-Ghassim Wane, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for the helpful briefing he has just given us on the establishment of the joint force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel).

We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate to the delegation of Sahel Member States — represented here today by the Permanent Representative of Mali and joined by the representatives of Chad, the Niger, Mauritania and Burkina Faso — the deep condolences and sympathies that the delegation of Senegal expressed following the despicable terrorist attacks on 13 and 14 August in Ouagadougou and Mali. Our condolences also go to every country whose citizens died in those cowardly terrorist attacks, including two from Senegal. We should therefore firmly condemn terrorism and violent extremism in all their forms and manifestations, regardless of motive or perpetrator.

The despicable attacks in Ouagadougou and Douentza are a tragic reminder of the intensity of this threat and its rampant spread in West Africa and the Sahel. That is why, as the Security Council did in its adoption on 21 June of resolution 2359 (2017), Senegal once again welcomes the establishment of the joint force for the Sahel, which Assistant Secretary-General Wane has just described to us with details not only of its launch but also of its expected coordination with other missions such as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and Operation Barkhane. Senegal therefore calls the international community to put its solidarity into action by giving broad, rapid support to the G-5 Sahel in terms of financial, logistical and human resources so that it can be operationalized as soon as possible. It is urgent that we ensure that together with the Multinational Joint Task Force of the Lake Chad basin and the support of organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and the African Union, and of bilateral and multilateral partners, the G-5 Sahel can

become operational in mobilizing against terrorism in general, in full respect for the spirit and indeed the letter of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel — because it goes without saying that military efforts alone cannot eradicate these terrorists and must therefore be part of a comprehensive approach whose focus includes combating organized crime and trafficking in arms, drugs and human beings, but also encompasses improving education and strengthening resilience to the multiple effects of climate change.

In conclusion, I would like to echo the delegations of France and Ethiopia in saying that the international community must be committed to taking on its moral and political responsibilities on this issue. We believe that the effective implementation of the alliance for the Sahel just announced will be a major step in that direction.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to thank Mr. El-Ghassim Wane, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his substantial briefing.

Russia supports a speedy and appropriate response by the international community to the challenges and threats facing the African continent generally and the Sahelo-Saharan region in particular. We have consistently supported a united international effort that will enable us to agree on specific approaches to combating the threat of terrorism, with an emphasis on cooperation with the countries of the region in strengthening their anti-terrorist activities. However, we believe that in order to achieve lasting peace in Africa, the role of the Africans themselves is becoming increasingly important. In that regard, we welcome the establishment by the countries of the region of the Group of Five for the Sahel joint force to counter terrorism, and we support resolution 2359 (2017), which approved its deployment.

The full-scale deployment of the joint force on the ground will help to deal with a number of challenges, not just combating the terrorist threat. Terrorists work closely with various criminal groups, pirates and smugglers. They exploit national and transnational security gaps to carry out their illicit activities. In essence, they capitalize on chaos, instability and the suffering of civilians. They provide material support to terrorists, and, as a result, drug and weapons smuggling as well as uncontrolled and illicit migration flourish in the region. The serious nature of the ongoing danger posed by terrorist groups in the Sahel region was once again made clear by the 13 August attack on a hotel in Burkina Faso and on the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali unit and Malian soldiers yesterday. We strongly condemn these bloody attacks against civilians and peacekeepers. We extend our condolences to the families and friends of those who died and wish the victims a speedy recovery. Without a victory over the terrorist hydra, it will be impossible to achieve political stabilization or to make significant progress in solving social and economic problems.

At the same time, military measures alone cannot solve these problems. In order to counter extremist ideology, its breeding ground needs to be eliminated by better tackling pressing social and economic problems and by strengthening Government institutions in that part of the African continent.

In that regard, the consistent implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel is now more pertinent than ever. There is a need to increase the return from its mechanism. What is crucial in these efforts is the coordinating role of the United Nations and its close cooperation with African structures and different States. Furthermore, their opinion is a priority in this process.

For the international community, the Sahelo-Saharan region is facing a lot of work in terms of assistance regarding the approaches developed by the African countries themselves, and Russia is prepared to continue supporting them. It is also important for external assistance not to devolve into the imposition of one-size-fits-all solutions that include elements foreign to African States. It was precisely external interference and the destruction of statehood in Libya that led to the wholesale destabilization of the country and the Sahel region as a whole.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): I want to begin by offering my condolences to all of those affected by the attacks in Burkina Faso and Mali in recent days. The United Kingdom condemns in the strongest possible terms the violent actions of those intent on undermining stability in the region. They will not succeed. I would also like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Wane for his briefing today.

The United Kingdom has consistently welcomed the creation of a Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) joint force and its objectives to tackle terrorism,

organized crime, people-smuggling and human trafficking. We are encouraged by the early progress that has been made since the adoption of resolution 2359 (2017) and look forward to the joint force mobilizing and implementing its operations. We echo the importance, spelled out in resolution 2359 (2017), of the protection of civilians, respect for human rights and the integration of a gender perspective.

In his briefing, Assistant Secretary-General Wane described the resource challenges faced by the G-5 Sahel joint force. It is important that its needs be clearly set out, so that the international community can explore supporting its operations and finances, including through the donor conference that we heard about today. The United Kingdom is offering training support, including through the European Union, and we continue to explore what more we can do.

We welcome the recent announcement by France and Germany of the new Sahel alliance and fully support this initiative. We urge all Council members to examine how they can provide further assistance, as we ourselves are doing.

We were reminded again in recent days of the security challenges facing the region. The international community is committed to confronting these problems, and the United Kingdom believes that the joint force is an important regional component of these efforts.

In addition to military efforts, however, we need to tackle the political challenges. We welcome the progress that has been made, but we urge all Malian parties to speed up the implementation of the peace agreement and to continue their dialogue. Important steps have been taken in recent months, and we hope and believe that these will continue.

May I conclude on a personal note by thanking you, Mr. President, and colleagues around the table for your welcome to me here today and to say how much I am looking forward to working with all Council members.

Mr. Fesko (Ukraine): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Wane for his update.

Ukraine is extremely concerned by the scale of terrorist activities in the Sahel region. We strongly condemn the terrorist attack in Burkina Faso's capital, Ouagadougou, on Sunday. My delegation expresses sincere condolences to our colleagues from France and Senegal in connection with the loss of their citizens in this attack. Similarly, we condemn the attack against the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and mourn the death of a Togolese peacekeeper. This and other recent militant strikes in the region illustrate the fact that the threat of terrorism continues to loom over most of the Sahel.

The ongoing instability in Mali remains one of the main factors causing a spillover of violence into neighbouring countries. In that regard, we are convinced that the deployment of the Malian defence and security forces throughout the country to combat violent extremists and maintain law and order is urgently needed.

However, given the scope of the security challenges in the Sahel, it is apparent that Mali cannot fight terrorism alone. The international community and the region in particular must continue consolidating their efforts to battle this scourge.

As we learned today, the deployment of the Group of Five for the Sahel joint force is under way. We understand that funding remains a challenge. In that context, we hope that the conference scheduled for mid-September in Berlin as well as other relevant initiatives will help to cover existing financial gaps.

There is information to suggest that Mali and Burkina Faso were on alert about the planned attack that occurred on Sunday. Even though it was not prevented, this shows that MINUSMA's intelligence-gathering operation is bearing fruit. In that context, we believe that intelligence-sharing between MINUSMA and the joint force, once it is fully operational, should be one of the priority areas of cooperation.

Finally, we look forward to the October report of the Secretary-General on this issue and are ready to engage constructively in considering its findings.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

At the outset, I should like to thank Mr. Wane for his important briefing. I should like also to express our condolences to the Government and the people of Burkina Faso in connection with yesterday's terrorist attack, and to the Government and the people of Mali, as well as to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, for the victims of the attacks that took place yesterday.

Egypt believes that adoption of resolution 2359 (2017) represents a necessary message of support to the regional efforts of the countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) to address the phenomena of terrorism and organized crime, even though the content of the resolution did not meet the aspirations of those States in terms of going beyond statements of political support and making an international commitment to providing effective assistance for the efforts of the G-5 Sahel joint force on the ground. However, we joined the consensus since the resolution represents a step forward on which we can build in future.

The briefing given by Mr. Wane and the facts on the ground have served to highlight the scope and magnitude of the challenges and risks confronting the States of the G-5 Sahel and of the Sahel as a whole. Those risks extend to neighbouring regions. It is important to address this matter in a realistic way that recognizes the threat and works to provide real and appropriate solutions that are commensurate with the scope of the threat. The diverging views on the role of the Security Council and the United Nations in providing such support must not prevent the drawing up of a comprehensive approach that takes into consideration the fact that a failure to provide sustainable and practical support could double the humanitarian, economic and military cost of any attempt to contain the deterioration of the situation in future.

Egypt therefore believes that supporting African solutions to African problems is the optimal and highest-yielding investment. Supporting regional initiatives is the only way to reach sustainable solutions. Failure to do so would send the wrong message about the credibility of repeated statements concerning the importance of cooperation and partnership with the African Union. Egypt also stresses that we need to find comprehensive solutions to the challenges confronting the Sahel region, and therefore stresses yet again the need to revitalize the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel.

In conclusion, Egypt stresses that it will spare no effort to support its brothers and sisters in the G-5 Sahel States, be it through its contribution to Security Council discussions of the situation in Mali and the Sahel in general or by enhancing current joint cooperation programmes at the bilateral and regional levels. Such programmes are subject to ongoing improvement in accordance with stated needs and in consultation with the States of the region. Egypt recently pledged to allocate 1,000 military scholarships to commissioned and non-commissioned officers of the Sahel and Sahara States.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Mali.

Mr. Konfourou (Mali) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) in New York, I would first like to congratulate you, Sir, on the accession of your country, Egypt, to the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I would also commend the outstanding manner in which you have been conducting the Council's work. And I thank you for organizing this Council briefing on the operationalization process of the G-5 Sahel joint force, pursuant to resolution 2359 (2017), a force which has been endorsed by the African Union.

I wish to begin by paying tribute to the victims of the cowardly and barbaric attack on the Café-Restaurant Aziz-Istanbul in Ouagadougou on 13 August 2017, which left 18 people dead and injured others. I also wish to pay tribute to the victims of yesterday's terrorist attacks in Douentza and Timbuktu in Mali, which unfortunately also killed and injured people in the ranks of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the civilian and military forces of Mali. These criminal acts underscore the importance and urgency of operationalizing the G-5 Sahel joint force with the support of the international community. They also serve to strengthen the shared determination of our States to continue to work together to eradicate the terrorist threat in our shared area.

I would now like to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, for his unwavering support and for the excellent quality of the briefing just made to the Council by Assistant Secretary-General Wane.

Before going further, I would like to convey to the Council once again the thanks of the President of the Republic of Mali, His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, President-in-Office of G-5 Sahel, on behalf of his counterparts from Burkina Faso, Mauritania, the Niger and Chad, for the special attention that the Council continues to pay to the security situation in the countries of the Sahel, in particular the five countries dealt with in today's meeting.

Since the adoption of resolution 2359 (2017), on 21 June 2017, our Heads of State have been working tirelessly and with the support of friendly countries and partner organizations to operationalize swiftly and effectively the G-5 Sahel joint force. Considerable progress has been made in that regard. Following the appointment of Major General Didier Dacko as Force Commander, the rehabilitation of the joint force's headquarters in Sévaré, in the Mopti region, was undertaken and will soon be completed. Its official inauguration should take place shortly. The headquarters for the central zone, which consists of Burkina Faso, the Niger and Mali, located in Niamey, has already been rehabilitated, and the force support team is being set up at the staff level, again with the support of our partners. The first units will be deployed in October 2017, and all battalions should be in place by March 2018. The short-term operational priorities mainly involve cross-border military operations, the first of which is also scheduled for October 2017.

With regard to the force's budget, while the budget for initially establishing the force and maintaining it for a year has been set at €423 million, it is still being fine-tuned. To date, financial and material contributions pledged come to a total of €108 million, of which €50 million will be borne by the G-5 Sahel countries, €50 million by the European Union, and €8 million by France, by the end of 2017, as has just been explained. Furthermore, Mali and the Niger are making contributions to develop command-post infrastructure, namely, the initial command post in Bamako, the central command post in Sévaré and the central zone command post based in Niamey, the Niger. I welcome the commitment of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and that of its member States and its institutions, including the Islamic Development Bank, which have expressed their willingness to contribute to the financing of the joint force.

I would also like to assure the Council that the resources allocated to the force will be managed with full transparency and accountability. We are open to all kinds of support from our partners to help us to better manage the joint force's resources. The G-5 Sahel is already working with the European Union along those lines.

The progress that I have just explained to the Council in no way hides the challenges facing the operationalization process and the sustainable, viable and effective functioning of the joint force. Among those challenges, we would highlight the mobilization of the full funding of the force. This is therefore an opportunity for me to renew our appeal to all friendly countries and international partner organizations to help us secure the budget so as to ensure the rapid and effective deployment of the force. In that regard, I welcome the prospect of holding an international planning conference in December of next year in Brussels, pursuant to resolution 2359 (2017).

I also welcome the establishment of the alliance for the Sahel, the first high-level meeting of which is to be held in Washington, D.C., in October. The alliance for the Sahel aims to help development actors to find innovative mechanisms to enhance the effectiveness of actions carried out with their partners throughout the Sahel. It will address the most important aspect, one that will give hope to our youth, our women and our children — development.

We also have immediate needs in the areas of battalion equipment, support for the tactical mobility of the deployed units and the reinforcement of their logistical and protection capacities in the areas of operation. We also require the setting up of a suitable communication network to link the units operating in one area and the joint force headquarters to the three command posts I have mentioned. Finally, we need assistance in the areas of emergency medical evacuation and improvised explosive devices.

On the question of coordinating the work of the joint force with that of the other forces already present in our space, I stress that the deployment of the joint force will not adversely affect the action of the national forces of the member States nor the presence of partner forces — MINUSMA and the French Operation Barkhane — or that of any other friendly organization operating in the G-5 Sahel space. Instead, the joint force provides a framework for coordinating and enhancing joint efforts to increase its impact.

The cooperation and liaison mechanism of the joint force, Operation Barkhane and MINUSMA will be based on a mechanism already in place among MINUSMA, the Malian armed forces and Operation Barkhane. That mechanism, which will be enlarged to include the joint force, is a coordinating body for mutual operational and logistical support, intelligence sharing and the coordination of operations.

Accordingly, it is expected that the G-5 Sahel joint force headquarters in Sévaré, Mopti, will include liaison

officers from bilateral and multilateral partners as needed. Other relevant additional arrangements relating to the proper coordination of cooperation among the joint force, MINUSMA and the French forces, within their respective mandates, remain a possibility.

In the context of cooperation with other States, the strategic concept of operations of the G-5 Sahel joint force reaffirms the force's adherence to the African Union Peace and Security Architecture. It also takes into account the previous decisions of the Nouakchott process, the African Union Strategy for the Sahel Region, and the Joint Military Staff Committee of the Sahel Region, which includes Algeria, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger.

Finally, I can assure the Council that the operations of the joint force will be respectful of gender, human rights and international humanitarian law. A civilian component will be deployed within the force to ensure strict compliance with those standards. I renew the commitment of the G-5 Sahel Heads of State to the effective operationalization and effective functioning of the joint force. In that regard, we greatly appreciate the equally decisive support of our bilateral and multilateral partners and we sincerely hope that this critical support, both material and logistical, will enable the joint force to be fully operational.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.